

Governors Island, New York Arsenal
Storehouse (Building #107)
Governors Island
New York Harbor
New York City
New York County
New York

HABS No. NY-5715-6C

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5715-6C

GOVERNORS ISLAND, NEW YORK ARSENAL, STOREHOUSE (Building No. 107)

Location: The building is located north of Andes Road, north of Buildings #105 and #135, Governors Island, New York Harbor, New York, New York County, New York.

Present Owner: United States Coast Guard

Present Occupant: United States Coast Guard

Present Use: Offices

Significance: This building was built in 1857 to expand the storage capacity of the New York Arsenal. It relates to the other buildings of the arsenal in its scale, building materials, and historical purpose.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The present building was constructed during the season of 1856-1857 when it was described in the 1856 inspection report as a "new carriage shed" for gun carriages. It first appeared on an 1857 map of the island and served as the arsenal's fourth storehouse.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The War Department of the United States (renamed the Department of the Army after 1947) owned the building until 1966 when the Governors Island was transferred to the United States Coast Guard.
4. Builder: The building was probably constructed by civilian laborers under the direction of the Commanding Officer of the New York Arsenal (Inspection Report, 1854).

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5. Original plans and construction: Building 107 was constructed as a fourth storehouse in 1857. Its first appearance on a map drawn in 1857 shows a long rectangular building with the dimensions 125' x 80' and a roof-line axis running north-south. The cost of this structure was estimated as \$7,939.03 in a 1908 history of the New York Arsenal.
6. Additions and alterations: The structure has undergone many modifications and alterations. The original building was half the size of the current structure and had a stone foundation and common bond brick walls. These features are visible on the north and west walls. The structure was oriented to the east since the outer boundary of the arsenal was located on its west side. No evidence of archways appears on the west side and the east side of the original structure is now an interior wall.

In 1904, a fire damaged the building and it was rebuilt during 1904 and 1905. A map of Governors Island dated 1908 shows no appreciable increase in the size of the structure. Between 1908 and 1918, a second structure was built along the eastern wall of the original storehouse and a second gable roof was added. This addition was built on a concrete foundation with all-stretcher bond walls. Another brick addition was built at the southwest corner. The walls of these additions show no evidence of large doorways. Probably the industrial sash windows shown in later plans were installed at this time. The general form of the structure is visible in an aerial photograph of Governors Island taken in 1918.

In 1940, a new addition was constructed to fill in the southeast corner. This included the recessed arch entryway.

In 1979, the industrial sash windows were replaced with double-hung sash windows.

The patches under the windows were repairs made when the old individual heating and cooling units were removed.

The brick entry porch on the north end was replaced during the 1980s.

B. Historical context:

After the New York Arsenal was established by the Ordnance Department in 1833, the lack of sufficient storage space for ordnance quickly became apparent. Expansion on the island was a problem because no growth could interfere with the lines of fire from Fort Columbus. In 1849, the Arsenal's boundaries were expanded to present day Andes Road. On the west side of the arsenal, the boundary remained the same until 1853 when a triangular strip of land was annexed to the arsenal. The site of this storehouse was originally proposed to be built on in 1847 but was not utilized until 1856 when the inspector reported that a new carriage shed was being erected.

In 1904, this storehouse was damaged by fire. After it was rebuilt in 1905, it was used as a paint storage shed.

After the Ordnance Department closed the New York Arsenal in 1920, the building served as a storage area for the Second Corps Area until it was renovated in 1940 to serve as office space for the Judge Advocate and the Director of Supplies for the Second Service Command.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is an example of a simple, functional style of army architecture that relates to the other buildings of the New York Arsenal in its scale, materials, and history.
2. Condition of fabric: The condition of the building shows wear. The brickwork has been patched and the double gable roof leaks.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building is a rectangular brick building, 180' (13-bay side) X 59'. It is a one-story structure with a partial basement.
2. Foundations: The foundation is of stone with a granite water table along the west side and the northwest corner. On the east side, the foundation is concrete over brick, 2' thick.

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3. Walls: The walls are brick. The original wall along the northwest part of the structure is common bond (1 header row to 5 stretcher rows). The southwest addition, the east portion of the building, and the north end are all stretcher bond. Under each window are patched areas to repair the brickwork where air conditioning units were removed. The thickness of the walls between the 1857 portion of the storehouse (northwest corner) and the southwest addition is 1'-2" thick. The thickness of the masonry wall separating the northwest portion of the building and the northeast section is 9 1/2" thick.
4. Structural systems, framing: The walls are external load bearing masonry with an interior wall composed of brick pillars 1'5" wide along the length of the center of the structure. These pillars support the wood truss roofs.
5. Porches: There is a modern brick enclosed entry porch with concrete steps at the north end.
6. Chimneys: There is one interior brick chimney with stone capping.
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: There is a modern glass door in the north end. Along the east facade is a recessed modern glass door framed with a brick arch with a stone keystone. The entrance is flanked by brick pilasters with brick caps.
 - b. Windows: The windows are composed of three parts: a one-over-one light double hung sash flanked by fixed wood panels with wood panels above. Other windows are single one-over-one light double-hung sash or paired with a fixed light with flat brick arches. Most windows have concrete sills.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The roof is a corrugated metal double gable roof. There are metal vents in the roof.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: There is a simple molded wood cornice and metal gutters.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The building has a central hall which runs along the interior central masonry wall. Office space is partitioned from the spaces on either side of this wall.
2. Stairways: None
3. Flooring: The floor covering is linoleum or carpet.
4. Wall and Ceiling finish: The brick walls are painted. There are some plaster and gypsum board walls and modern movable partitions. The ceilings are acoustical tile ceilings.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The office space is mainly open with a few doors. Those few doors are modern wood paneled doors with glass lights.
 - b. Windows: The windows are set in simple wood frames.
6. Decorative features and trim: None visible
7. Hardware: The hardware is all modern.
8. Mechanical equipment: The building is heated from the boiler in Building #105 and cooled by three air conditioning units. There is also a test site for heating domestic water by solar energy.
9. Original furnishings: None

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: This structure, when it was built, was located along the west boundary of the New York Arsenal complex. It was oriented to the east with its back to Fort Columbus. The structure has maintained this orientation except for the addition of windows along the west side. Along the west side is Andes Road which defines the outer boundaries of the New York Arsenal and winds to the ferry slip. Along the east side is a parking lot shared with Buildings #105 and #135.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Maps and architectural drawings:

The following documents are in the Cartographic and Architectural Branch of the National Archives, Record Group 77, Maps and Plans of the Office of the Chief of Engineers.

Copy of "Plan of Capt. Thornton" referred to in Adjts. General's letter of September 24, 1847 to Lt. Col. Talcott, Fortification File, Drawer 37, Plate 42.

Map of a Survey of the shore of Governor's Island made under the direction of Major John G. Barnard, Corps of Engineers, 1857. Fortification File, Drawer 37, Plate 42.

Map of Governor's Island. Surveyed by Major John G. Barnard, Corps of Engineers, 1867. Fortification File, Drawer 37, sheet 55.

Map of Governor's Island. Surveyed by 1st Lieut. Eugene Graffin, Corps of Engineers and Frederick N. Owens Assistant Engineer, 1879. Fortification File, Drawer 37, sheet 63.

Map showing location of Water, Drain and Sewer Pipes on Governors Island. Office of the Post Quartermaster, Fort Columbus, 1879. Traced Nov. 1884. Miscellaneous Forts File, Series A, Fort Columbus.

Governors Island, 1902. Blueprint File, Governors Island, Map #10.

The following map and plans are available from Facilities Engineering, New York Support Center, Governors Island, New York, New York:

First U.S. Army Engineers Map of Governors Island, 1908.

Additions and Alterations to Building No. 107, Office of the Quartermaster, 1940. (Copies of plans in HABS No. NY-5715-6C Field Records).

B. Views

Photograph of Governors Island, ca. 1918, Governors Island Museum.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

The following sources are located in the Navy and Old Army Branch of the National Archives, Record Group 156, Ordnance Department, Box 1003.

Inspection report of New York Arsenal, October 12, 1953, by R.S. Baker, Lt. Colonel Ordnance and Inspector.

Reports of Inspections of Rome Arsenal, Watervliet and New York Arsenal by S. Churchill, Inspector General, 14 January 1854.

Inspection report of New York Arsenal, October 17, 1856, by H.K. Craig, Colonel of Ordnance.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Fort Jay, Governors Island, New York. A Master Plan and Program for Future Development by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, 1945.

National Archives, Navy and Old Army Branch. "New York Arsenal, Governors' Island". Report on History of New York Arsenal prepared for Chief of Ordnance, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., October 15, 1908.

Ordnance Department. Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1905. Vol. ix. Report of the Chief of Ordnance. Washington, D.C.: General Printing Office, 1905, pp. 66-67.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) at the request of the United States Coast Guard, Third Coast Guard District, Governors Island, New York, who funded the project. It is an addition to work accomplished during the summers of 1982 and 1983. This entailed an historic structures inventory, a National Historic Landmark District nomination and documentation of five properties which was completed in 1984. A three-volume report and inventory cards containing the results of the historic structures inventory were transmitted to the Library of Congress as field records under HABS No. NY-5715. The National Historic Landmark District nomination was submitted and acted upon favorably by the National Park System Advisory Board in October of 1984. This project is to document a select list of structures including the New York Arsenal.

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Sally Kress Tompkins, Deputy Chief of HABS/HAER, was project manager. Jet Lowe, HAER staff photographer, completed the large format photography. Jay Silberman, Environmental Specialist, District Planning Office, Third Coast Guard District, Governors Island, served as manager and coordinator of the project for the U.S. Coast Guard. Katherine Crandine was project historian.